

Great Salt Lake Water Quality Steering Committee Meeting Summary

August 22, 2006, 3 p.m. – 5 p.m.

Dept. of Environmental Quality, Room 201, 168 N 1950 W, Salt Lake City, Utah.

Steering Committee Members and Alternates

in Attendance:

Dianne Nielson
Richard West
Clay Perschon
Maunsel Pearce
Dave Naftz
Leland Myers
Walt Baker
Dave Grierson
Don Leonard
Kelly Payne
Richard Bay

Others Present

Holly Godsey
Bill Moellmer
Theron Miller
Ying-Ying Macauley
Jeff Denbleyker
Florence Reynolds
Sanwat Chaudhuri
Scott Hyner
Kevin Uno

Walt Baker opened the meeting, and performed roll call for the Steering Committee members. Corrections were made to the May 16 meeting notes. The May 16, 2006, meeting summary was approved.

It was discussed that Rino Dicaldo had left state employment. Rino is about 3/4ths of the way finished with modeling selenium in the wetlands. His work is expected to be completed by the end of the year.

Update on the Great Salt Lake Selenium Contracts

Bill Moellmer and Jeff Denbleyker presented a PowerPoint presentation summarizing progress. The PowerPoint is currently posted on the website.

Bill summarized recent discussions in the Science Panel meeting on August 9, 2006. The details of the Science Panel meeting on August 9, 2006, are available on the webpage under Science Panel Prior Meetings. The Science Panel is currently looking at biomagnifications up the food chain to set a selenium standard for the open waters of Great Salt Lake. Jeff reported on the status of the contracts and the progress of the studies under those contracts. Contracts with the labs were recently executed. Bill said that, overall, things were going very well. Little variation was being made out in the field. The Science Panel would have the data it needs to develop a selenium standard by spring of 2007.

The next Science Panel meeting is scheduled for November 15 and 16. At that time, the laboratory results should be available for the panel discussion. Prior to the November meeting, the Panel would conduct monthly teleconference calls on September 19 and October 24. Maunsel Pearce asked whether there would be additional bird sampling in 2007. Bill said that given what they currently have, they should be able to make some characterization, and that a decision on whether or not to sample more would be made as the data comes in.

Financial Status Report

Walt Baker reviewed the current budget summary, also posted on the web. As of August 21, the balance was \$1.5 million with \$243,897 disbursed to date.

Project WEST Science Education Outreach Presentation

A PowerPoint presentation outlining WEST program's goals and accomplishments was presented by Holly Godsey, WEST Project Coordinator, and two graduate student fellows Kevin Uno and Scott Hyner. The presentation slides would be posted on the GSL Steering Committee webpage.

WEST – which stands for Water, the Environment, Science and Teaching – is a program funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF) and other partners. Its purpose is to bring graduate fellows and public schools students in grades K-12 together to promote science education. WEST is taking donations from several groups, including Friends of the Great Salt Lake. Support is being sought from individual Steering Committee members and/or from the group as a whole.

WEST's next project is to study the Great Salt Lake ecosystems by conducting actual research and contributing data to an ongoing project. Dave Naftz and Friends of the Great Salt Lake are already involved. Holly indicated that the WEST was hoping to take 12 student groups on a field trip to the Great Salt Lake. The cost was between \$1,800 and \$2,000 per trip. WEST currently needs funds for 5 of the 12 groups.

The Committee thanked Holly for her presentation.

Upcoming Meetings

Leland Meyer suggested that the next Steering Committee meeting include a summary presentation of the Science Panel meeting on November 15 and 16, including a summary of the findings from the data collection.

It was decided that the next meeting of the Steering Committee will be on December 5, 2006, at 3 p.m. in DEQ Building #2 Room 201.

Other Business

Storage of Extra Samples: Jeff Denbleyker reported that extra tissue and sediment samples are currently stored at various PI facilities and the labs. There is a desire to centralize it all and a workgroup is looking for options to do that. The extra samples could be available for additional selenium study and future mercury study. Bill Moellmer noted that tissue samples are freeze-dried so they can be stored for quite a while. Also, the sample information is being cataloged through an Excel/Access database. Walt Baker added that the workgroup would soon have a game plan.

EPA Status of GSL Work: Maunsel Pearce said that EPA had elevated the level of concern for the Great Salt Lake within Region 8. He thanked Dianne Nielson and Walt Baker for their work on this issue. It meant that more money should be available for studies. EPA water directors had toured the Farmington Bay study area. The Governor also took the same tour. Dianne said when the Governor was in Washington recently, he talked to EPA Administrator Steve Johnson about the importance of completing this work. The Governor came away impressed and, as additional data is gathered, Dr. Nielson said he would be shown what they were learning. EPA has also made mercury one of its focus interests. Leland Myers said that he had heard from an EPA contact that Region 8 would like to elevate the Great Salt Lake to a Chesapeake Bay status. This would be good for the project in terms of ongoing funding. Leland suggested that local politicians be encouraged to look at Farmington Bay. Walt said the Water Quality Board would be taking a similar tour in October.